



**CALFED  
BAY-DELTA  
PROGRAM**

*Reading*

1416 Ninth Street, Suite 1155  
Sacramento, California 95814

(916) 657-2666  
FAX (916) 654-9780

August 25, 1998

Robert Faber, Maj. Counsel  
House Resources Subcommittee on Water and Power  
1522 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Mr. Faber:

It was a pleasure to meet with you on August 19 to discuss CALFED Bay-Delta Program's process for evaluation of surface storage facilities. You indicated particular interest in our evaluation of the proposed Auburn Dam, and our decision not to select it for more detailed study. As I mentioned in the meeting, we have not officially excluded Auburn Dam from further consideration, but we have chosen not to devote our planning resources to it. An important consideration in this decision was the strong concerns of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, supported by technical information they provided to us. A quick review of our files yielded the following information, which is enclosed for reference:

- 1) Least-Cost CVP Yield Increase Plan, October 1995, prepared by U.S. Bureau of Reclamation, Mid Pacific Region and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. See Table III-7f, Summaries of Estimated Environmental Effects due to Construction and Operation of New Surface Storage Facilities.
- 2) Draft CALFED Bay-Delta Program Storage and Conveyance Component Inventories, March 1997, prepared by Bookman Edmonston Engineers under my supervision (Page A-7). See Issues, Legal and Institutional.
- 3) Letter to Roger Patterson from Felicia Marcus dated May 3, 1996, providing comments on the American River Water Resources Investigation (ARWRI), Planning Report and Draft EIR/EIS. See pages 3-5, "Auburn Dam Alternative". Page 6, "Summary of Conclusions and Recommendations", states:

"...The Auburn Dam alternative is 'environmentally unsatisfactory' (EU rating) because it would result in unmitigatable loss of unique, nationally significant canyon ecosystems of the Middle and North Forks of the American River."

Additional detailed information on potential impacts is included in the attachment to this letter.

- 4) American River Water Resources Investigation, Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act Report, June 1997, by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Region 1. Pages ii-iii of the Executive Summary states in part,

"...The North and Middle Forks of the American River are among the last free-flowing reaches of the major rivers draining the western slope of the central Sierra Nevada. The annual streamflows, elevation range and stream gradient, topography and stream orientation, high diversity of habitats of significant value to wildlife, and lack of significant human alterations combine to make the American River canyon unique among these scarce and declining ecosystems. Because of the unique character of the canyon ecosystem and the lack of sufficient suitable habitat for full in-kind

**CALFED Agencies**

**California**  
The Resources Agency  
Department of Fish and Game  
Department of Water Resources  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
• State Water Resources Control Board

**Federal**  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Department of Commerce  
National Marine Fisheries Service

Mr. Faber  
August 25, 1998  
Page Two

compensation for Impacts to its biological resources, the Service considers the Auburn Dam Alternative of the ARWRI to constitute an unacceptable change to an important national resource under the Service's Regional Wetland Protection Policy and other guidance. The Service also considers the Corps' detention dam alternative at the Auburn site unacceptable and has received Department of Interior support to elevate its position to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ)..."

- 5) Email exchange record involving Stein Buer (CALFED), Bob Pine (USFWS), and Bart Prose (USFWS), June 9 and 10, 1997. Bart Prose makes specific reference to Auburn Dam in his message, stating,

"...the ecological values lost from Auburn Dam would be greater, acre for acre and dollar for dollar, than those of most Central Valley projects because the ecological values at Auburn Dam are more rich and complex, more unique, and cannot be replaced."

- 6) Letter to Lester A. Snow from Wayne White, dated September 18, 1997 on the subject of environmental effects of potential reservoir sites. Paragraph two of this letter, which draws special attention to Los Banos Grandes and Auburn reservoir sites, was discussed in our meeting and suggests the enormous environmental hurdles in the way of implementing either project.
- 7) Meeting Handout Package dated July 23, 1998 for a CALFED Bay-Delta Program Surface Water Storage Components Screening Process Meeting showing on Table 2, Auburn Dam still on the list of reservoirs to be considered for screening.

If you have any further questions or comments about the formulation of CALFED's approach to evaluation of the Auburn Dam Project, please feel free to write or call me at (916) 653-6628.

Sincerely,



Stein M. Buer  
Assistant Director

Enclosures

cc: Richard Robinson, District Director  
Congressman John Doolittle  
2130 Professional Drive, Suite 190  
Roseville, CA 95661